

**Item 6. Core Schemes - Traffic Filters ETRO Approach**

**Cllr David Bartholomew**

Good afternoon Cabinet and members of the public.

You have heard many speakers today speaking passionately for and against the Traffic Filter Proposal.

I am here not to speak for or against the scheme, but to speak about Democracy.

County Councillors travel to County Hall not for personal gain or for pleasure, but to fulfil their Democratic duties representing the residents of Oxfordshire. It is of paramount importance that all councillors are treated equally, irrespective of the political party they might belong to.

Under the earlier version of the scheme, there was gross inequality in the proposed treatment of councillors. Those councillors who live in the city of Oxford were to be given unfettered car access to County Hall by way of the 100 resident passes they were to receive. Those councillors are all members of the administration and all members of either the Labour, Liberal Democrat or Green parties. No Conservative councillors were to be given passes as none resided in the city permit area.

The clear irony was that those councillors who could easily walk or get public transport to County Hall were to get Traffic Filter passes, yet Conservative councillors coming from rural areas with limited public transport options would get no passes and have only one route into County Hall via the Botley Road. In my own case, the car journey from the southernmost part of the county already takes an hour or more and being forced to divert onto the ring road, the A34 and then Botley Road would probably add another half an hour onto an already long journey. And no, coming by rail doesn't work. The journey would involve a 20-minute walk, two changes of train and take two hours or more.

So, if you decide to proceed with the scheme, it is absolutely essential that you adopt the recommended change to allow 25 passes per year to all Oxfordshire residents outside the Oxford permit area, so that Conservative councillors are not discriminated against and can properly represent their residents.

To sum up, I must re-state that I am not speaking in favour of the scheme, or against it. That decision is a matter where residents of Oxford deserve to have the loudest voice. What I am saying is that for Democracy to work, councillors must be treated equally. If you decide that the Traffic Filters are to go ahead, the recommendation to include 25 day passes per year for residents of Oxfordshire outside the Oxford permit area must be accepted. Thank you for your attention.